



PHOENIX
ANCIENT ART

GENEVA — NEW YORK

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Dionysus

Graeco-Roman, 1st century B.C. — 1st century A.D.

Bronze; silver with green gemstone inlays (eyes)

H including base: 25.5 cm (10.0 in)

Weight: 1545 g

The youthful god of wine is identified by the wreath which crowns the head. It is composed of ivy branches, his sacred plant, with their characteristic heart-shape leaves and clusters of berries. The god is standing in a self-representational pose, with the weight on his right leg, the left foot is slightly reared. The delicate curvature of the torso terminates with the head turned to the side and downward. One arm is lowered, there is a drinking horn in the hand (the wavy incisions imitate the rough surface of the horn). The other arm is bent and raised, there probably was a long thyrsus in that hand, his staff topped with a pine-corn.

His slender naked body is masterly modeled presenting very smooth and fluid transitions between the shapes. The quality of the bronze cast is superb and demonstrates the fine technique of incising the details, such as curly locks of the hair at the sides of face and long strands over the shoulders. The face has soft and sensitive lips, classical straight nose, and expressive eyes (the use of silver and green gemstone creates a striking effect reflecting the divine inspiration).

The figure is placed on a low square base with architectural moldings (such bases are not often preserved); the upper and lower edges are decorated with the relief ornament of tongues. The statuette could be placed in a *lararium*, a home shrine, among the images of other deities and spirits considered as family patrons and guards. A commission and purchase of a more expensive bronze figure with silver/gemstone inlays would make a dedication more significant. As the complexes of figurines found in the better-known Pompeiian *lararia* demonstrate, they were composed of the statuettes distinguished by size, normally with the images of principal deities larger than the others.

CONDITION

Glassy dark green patina; deposits inside the base; minor pits on the sides of base, on top of head, one green inlay was added.

PROVENANCE

Ex- Mr. E.R. collection, acquired in the early 1970's.

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MANFRINI-ARAGNO I., *Bacchus dans les bronzes hellénistiques et romains: les artisans et leur répertoire*, Lausanne, 1987, p. 73, no. 81.

“The use of silver and green gemstones for the eyes creates a striking effect reflecting the divine inspiration.”



2

Head of a female worshipper

Sumerian, Early Dynastic period, ca. 2600-2350 B.C.

Limestone

H: 7.2 cm (2.8 in)

The head, characterized by expressive carving, belonged to a statuette of a female worshipper, most probably standing frontally, with her hands clasped in front of her chest, wearing a long garment. The long and wavy hair frame the face; it is held in place by wide bands; the curly locks hanging down on either side form the scalloped pattern. The face has a prominent aquiline nose; the corners of full lips are turned up as if expressing a smile. The wide-open deep-set eyes have almond shape, they were once inlaid (light color shell and lapis lazuli, or black limestone, for the iris) as well as the deep arching groove indicating the uninterrupted line of the brows could be also inlaid (black bitumen). Similar figures of male and female worshippers, standing or seated, were found inside the Mesopotamian temples as dedicatory statues and statuettes, sometimes carrying inscriptions indicating the name of a god and the name of the person.

CONDITION

Reassembled from two parts; tip of nose and tips of hairlocks on the sides are broken off; surface weathered; a few chips.

PROVENANCE

Formerly in the Estate of Mrs. Charlotte Goodwin, widow of Dr. Mason F. Lord, Baltimore, Maryland, acquired prior to 1956.

PUBLISHED

4000 Years of Modern Art, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland, 1956, no. 2.

EXHIBITED

The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland, Nov. 7, 1956 - Jan. 13, 1957;
The Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York;
The Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania;
The Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

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3

Monumental head of Alexander the Great (356 – 323 B.C.)

Greek, Hellenistic, second half of the 3rd century B.C.

Marble

H: 63.5 cm (25.0 in)

The present over-life size head, on a long neck, with small of art the left shoulder, is the largest known portrait of Alexander the Great in the world. Impressive in scale, composition and stone carving, the sculpture is an important work to contribute to the study of Alexander's iconography. It undoubtedly belonged to a statue; because of its fragmentary condition, it is problematic to precise if the figure was standing, seated, or equestrian. A few bronze statuettes have been preserved but much fewer full statues (a standing figure in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul and a seated one in the Archaeological Museum in Antalya, both marble works of the Roman Imperial period) - despite the rich testimonia on their extensive number during Alexander's own lifetime and afterwards in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, when a posthumous cult has been created by his successors and the recreations of his image continued to be made as *Imitatio Alexandri* lasting phenomenon. The head survived with a considerably damaged surface of the face, probably as the result of religious intolerance toward the pagan sculpture.

Ancient sources inform that there were monuments erected in Greece, beginning with Alexander's representations as a boy/youth, the son of the ruling Macedonian king Philip II (the Crown Prince type according to the classification of M. Bieber). A bronze chariot group of Alexander (as the young general of Philip II) and Philip by the Athenian sculptor Euphranor was set up in the Agora of Athens after the battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C. Pausanias recorded the group of figures (Philip, Alexander, Amyntas,

Olympias, and Eurydike) made of ivory and gold by sculptor Leochares, which was commissioned by Philip for the Philippeion at Olympia (*Description of Greece* V 20, 9-10).

The tradition has it that Lysippos became the only sculptor allowed to cast Alexander's image in bronze, as only Apelles to paint it, and Pyrgoteles to engrave it on gems (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 7, 125). Lysippos created several and different images of Alexander, single figures and multfigured compositions: Alexander as a youth; standing with the spear stuck in the ground; on horseback. A bronze equestrian group representing Alexander and his thirty-four companions at the battle at river Granikos, 334 B.C., was erected at Dion in Macedonia, and later brought in Rome. Another sculptural group, also by Lysippos, depicted Alexander's lion hunt, it was dedicated at Delphi.

The unique personal appearance of Alexander was best described by Plutarch (*On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 2.2): "When Lysippos had finished his first Alexander looking up with his face turned towards the sky (just as he was accustomed to look, tilting his head slightly to one side), someone not inappropriately inscribed the following epigram:

This statue seems to look at Zeus and say:
"Keep thou Olympos; me let earth obey!"

Wherefore Alexander gave orders that Lysippos alone should make his portrait. For only he, it seemed, brought out Alexander's real character in the bronze and gave form to his essential



excellence. For the others, in their eagerness to represent his crooked neck and his melting and limpid eyes, were unable to preserve his virile and leonine demeanor". Beside the exceptional heroic qualities, Alexander appeared clean-shaven, which was an innovation in man's look at the time.

To the list of Alexander's lifetime single statues, honorific or cult, one should add Alexander wearing the horns of Ammon (the statue was allegedly commissioned by Alexander himself and dedicated to the Ammon' sanctuary), and Alexander the Founder of Alexandria. The latter had two variants: the equestrian bronze statue and a standing figure wearing the aegis, both were in Alexandria. The statue of Alexander as God Invincible created in 324/323 B.C. was first set in Athens. "If Alexander wishes to be god, let him be a god," - was the answer of Spartans when Alexander requested divine honors in the Greek cities (Aelian, *Various History* 2. 19).

Studying the surviving examples, both from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the contemporary scholarship distinguishes a few important types of Alexander's portraits. The Azara Alexander, a Roman marble herm found in the Hadrian's villa at Tivoli by the Spanish minister Don José Nicolás de Azara in 1779 (presented to Napoleon, today at the Louvre), which establishes a major recognized portrait type of Alexander, is often thought to be a reproduction of the original by Lysippos. It demonstrates his hair design with distinction, especially that individual feature found in almost all portraits of Alexander - the *anastolē*, or "cow-lick," which refers to the dramatic upswing of hair above the middle of the forehead and looks like the water jets symmetrically spreading from a fountain. In the present head, the hair strands separated by deep grooves of the drilled marble were articulated more "graphically", which rather

reflects the design of the Alexander Schwarzenberg (Roman, Early Imperial, 20 B.C. - A.D. 20; Glyptothek, Munich). Although somewhat shorter than at the Azara head, the long strands on the sides and on the back of the neck of this present work are typical for Alexander's leonine hairstyle. The Erbach type is also thought to be created during the Alexander's lifetime. To this type belongs the Acropolis Museum head (inv. 1331), sometimes thought to be made in ca. 340-330 B. C. (during Alexander's lifetime) and attributed to Leochares. The large deep-set eyes and especially the "sunken" area below the lower eyelids links this present head with a portrait of the Erbach type.

Similar to the Azara and Erbach types, the hair arrangement marks the presence of a diadem set around the head, which could be made of gold or bronze. In reality a simple band of flat white cloth tied around the head and knotted behind with free-hanging ends, the diadem is unmistakable royal insignia in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Alexander the Great was the first Macedonian king to wear the diadem as an exclusive symbol of his kingship. More statues have been erected after the death of Alexander by his successors and other dynasts, by the Greek cities. In his posthumous cult, the possibility could be that the image was supplied with a crown instead of a diadem. The statues of the divinized Alexander appeared in Alexandria where he was venerated as a fore-father of the Ptolemaic dynasty and where his tomb was situated. In the sanctuary of Tyche, there was a group of Alexander, crowned by Ge, who was being crowned in turn by Tyche, who was flanked by Nikai. The famous festive procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphos displayed statues of Alexander and Ptolemy II both wreathed with golden ivy crowns, while a chariot drawn by live elephants carried the golden statue of Alexander flanked by Nike and Athena.







The suggestions about the look of the statue, to which this present head once belonged, have been made; it considered the uneven cut of the lower neck and proposed the figure wearing a chlamys around the neck, or a figure wearing a cuirass. However, the significant bare skin area below the neck at the back excludes the presence of drapery or armor. Most probably, the figure presented a standing Alexander in a heroic nudity, with his head slightly tilted to the left (a reminiscent of the Schwarzenberg type), and, as the position of the left shoulder indicates, the left arm was raised holding a spear. The Alexander the Conqueror statue type (reflected in the bronze statuette at the Louvre, late 4th – early 3rd century B.C., and the Neli-dow statuette, 2nd – 3rd century A.D., Harvard Art Museums) was assigned to Lysippos based on the record by Plutarch:

“...Lysippos ...had represented Alexander holding a spear, the glory of which no length of years could ever dim, since it was truthful and was his by right”
(*Isis and Osiris* 24, p. 360D).

A basic composition for the representation of an athlete or a warrior, the figure holding a spear got an important symbolism in depicting the legendary conqueror judging from the record of Diodorus Siculus (XVII 17, 2): “Alexander advanced with his army to the Hellespont and transported it from Europe to Asia. He personally sailed with sixty fighting ships to the Troad, where he flung his spear from the ship and fixed it in the ground, and then leapt ashore himself the first of the Macedonians, signifying that he received Asia from the gods as a spear-won prize”.

The present head was carved separately from the rest of the figure. This could be explained by the colossal size of the sculpture and the possibility of the *acrolithic* technique (employing different materials in the work such as marble and wood, painted or gilded). A characteristic detail must be observed on the proper left side of the head, a rough marble surface with two holes with remains of the iron pins, as well as two holes on the shoulder side. Their nature would not be a damage and later repairs; this is the result of the original technique of piecing and connecting the parts carved separately. The technique of piecing is well attested for the sculptures made in the workshops of Alexandria. As Egypt lacked its own white marble quarries, the blocks of marble have been imported, and the economy of production required to use the parts in a single sculpture. The Hellenistic marble heads of Alexander in the British Museum (inv. 1872,0515.1), the Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. 1927.209), and Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, (Copenhagen, inv. 574), all dating back to the 3rd century B.C. and said to be found in Alexandria, demonstrate this particular technique of carving. The comparison with the Copenhagen head reveals a closer similarity in the modeling of the hair, with deep grooves separating the strands at the forehead and lower sides and a summary treatment of them on the upper and back parts, as well as in the contrast of marble surface, polished on the skin and left rough in the hair. It might be suggested that this present head, which belonged to a monumental statue of Alexander the Great, a vestige of his posthumous cult, was created in Alexandria.

CONDITION

Surface damaged (forehead, eyebrows, cheeks, and lips); nose, chin, a few hair strands on the proper right side broken off, large chips around the neckline, a few scratches and pits; encrustation in places; original polishing especially noticeable at upper forehead and lower eyelids.

PROVENANCE

Ex- European private collection, Paris and Geneva acquired between 1950-1991; Thence by descent in 1996.

EXHIBITED

On loan to the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich, 1991; a plaster cast is on display in the Museum of Casts of Classical Statues, Munich, inv. no. 932.

PUBLISHED

ARACHNE database: 6120122.

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1. A plaster cast of this head is on display in the Museum of Casts of Classical Statues, Munich, inv. no. 932.
2. The Alexander Schwarzenberg. Glyptothek, Munich.
3. Alexander the Great (the Erbach type). The Acropolis Museum, Athens.
4. The Azara Alexander. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



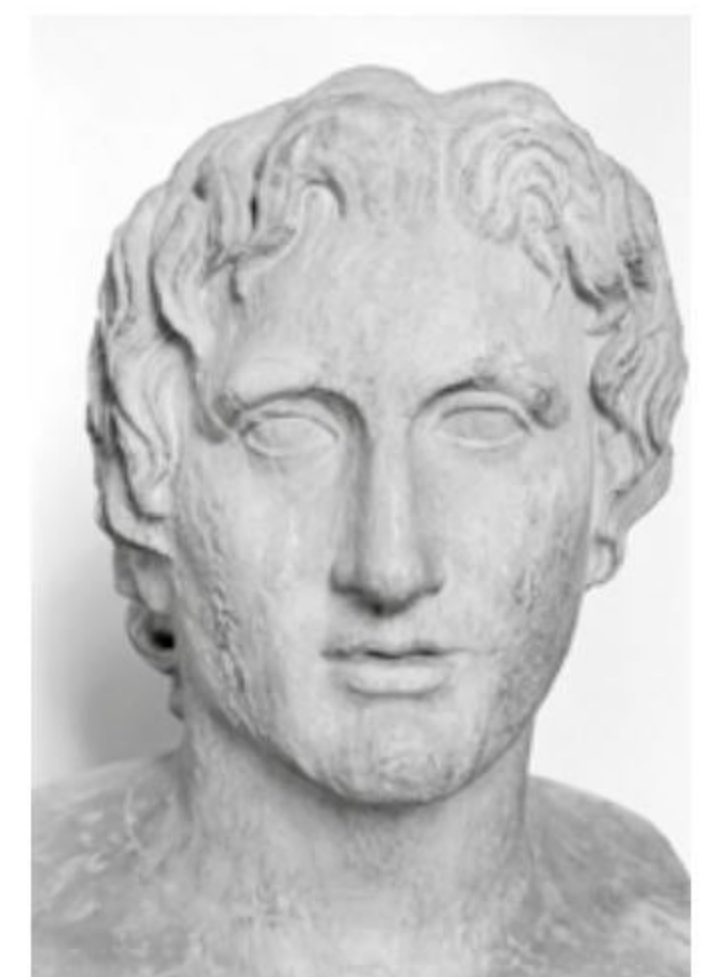
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2.



3.



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4

Large ribbed bowl

Roman, 1st century A.D.

Glass

H: 12.0 cm (4.7 in) – D: 20.1 cm (7.9 in)

This thick-walled bowl is remarkable both for its excellent state of preservation and for its unusual size, which makes it one of the largest examples currently known. It was molded and pressed in a glass of orange-brown color, while the finish was obtained by polishing or grinding.

This vessel, whose deep body is semi-spherical, is decorated with 21 thick ribs arranged vertically or slightly diagonally along the outer wall; their presence recalls the metallic origin of the shape, inspired by the gadroon vases made of precious metal. Spaced along the rim, the ribs join and converge towards the rounded, slightly concave base. The tall, smooth rim is decorated in its inner part by a line that was incised using a grinding wheel. Ribbed cups and bowls exist in many chromatic and typological variations and were manufactured with different techniques: by lathe-turning, then modeled and decorated with a short stick, by pressing the required quantity of heated glass between a male mold and a female mold, or by printing a flat glass disk that was then rounded over a curved form.

The first examples of ribbed bowls date back to the second quarter of the 1st century B.C.; from the middle of that century, the shape suffered a minor variation, with the adoption of a flatter or slightly convex bottom, which made the vessel more stable. Their production increased considerably from the late Hellenistic period on and continued during the 1st century of the Empire with a very elaborate typology and various dimensions. The most common colors were first orange-brown, cobalt blue and aubergine; these were gradually replaced by a simple transparent glass with light blue, dark or pale green reflections around the mid-1st century A.D., when the taste for bright colors became old-fashioned. These bowls were largely used as tableware

across the Mediterranean world, from Italy to the more western and northern colonies of the Empire, from the Aegean to the Levant. This wide distribution suggests that they were produced in Italian and Syro-Palestinian workshops.

CONDITION

Complete and virtually intact. Minor chips on the rim and superficial wear. Small cracks and air bubbles in the glass.

PROVENANCE

Art Market, prior to 1978;
Christie's, London, 24-25 April 1978, lot 140;
Ex- Constable-Maxwell glass collection, UK;
Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., London, 9 June 1979, lot 32;
Sotheby's, London, 5 July 1982, lot 31;
Ex- Mr. & Mrs. Hans Benzian private collection, Lucerne, Switzerland, 1982;
Sotheby's London, 7 July 1994, lot 58.

PUBLISHED

Christie's, London, 24-25 April 1978, lot 140;
The Constable-Maxwell collection of Ancient Glass, Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., London, 9 June 1979, lot 32;
Sotheby's, London, 5 July 1982, lot 31;
The Benzion Collection of Ancient and Islamic Glass, Sotheby's London, 7 July 1994, lot 58.

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HARDEN D. B., *Glas der Caesaren*, Milan, 1988, p. 52, no. 28.
On the production of ribbed bowls, see:
GROSE D. F., *The Toledo Museum of Art, Early Ancient Glass*, New York, 1989, pp. 245ff. STERN E. M., SCHLICK-NOLTE B., *Early Glass of the Ancient World, 1000 B.C. A.D. 50, Ernesto Wolf Collection*, Ostfildern, 1994, pp. 72-79, nos. 84-85 and 89-96.



5

Cycladic Idol

Attributed to the Steiner Master

Greek, Cycladic, Early Cycladic II, ca. 2500-2400 B.C

Marble

H: 41.8 cm (16.5 in)

This exquisite idol is an outstanding statuette for several reasons: much larger than the average size, artistic qualities, excellent state of preservation, remains of paint, all elements that place it among the masterpieces of Cycladic sculpture.

The statuette, with slightly protruding breasts and lines of the pubic triangle emphasizing her femininity, is represented in the usual attitude of Cycladic "idols": nude and standing upright (but the position of the feet would not allow it to stand by itself), legs slightly bent, arms clasped on the belly; the head tilted backwards, the face (on which the nose only is sculpted) featuring a regular, oval shape. The elegant and smooth proportions are also emphasized by thin linear incisions or by slightly rounded volumes, which express other anatomical details: shape of the face, base of the neck, spine, lower buttocks, knees, fingers. The deep notch between the legs shows a thin, elongated opening between the calves.

Typologically, this is a beautiful example of a canonical "FAF (Folded-Arms Figure)" statuette. It belongs to the so-called "Spedos" variety, which represents the highest level of prehistoric Cycladic sculpture, towards the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C.: P. Getz-Gentle precisely classifies it in the "late Spedos" phase (2500-2400 B.C.) and, considering its size, its shape and its style, attributes this image to the "Steiner Master" and also the "Rodgers Sculptor", an artist known for two other statuettes, one of which is housed in Athens, at the N.P. Goulandris Museum of Cycladic Art, the other in an American collection.

Nowadays, prehistoric Cycladic art is famous mostly for these statuettes, whose design is both simple and attractive. Despite the strong beauty and seductive power they convey to the modern artistic taste, these figurines still keep many secrets, since their real purpose remains unknown.

These "idols" (which come almost exclusively from necropolises, when the location of their discovery is known) have been successively seen as concubines for the deceased, mourners, substitutes for human sacrifices, nurses for the deceased, representations of revered ancestors, toys to be taken to the afterlife, or figures enabling or helping the transition to the afterlife, etc.; other scholars connect them with the Great Mother, a goddess of procreation and fertility, worshiped from the Neolithic in the Near East, in Anatolia and in Central Europe.

Behind their remarkable unity of style, these statuettes probably hide various purposes that cannot be clearly understood today. According to P. Getz-Gentle, recent studies on their polychrome decoration allow us to attribute to them a more active role than previously thought: these figures would probably have embodied a protective being, definitely feminine and maternal (related to a sort of a patron saint, according to P. Getz-Gentle), who commanded natural phenomena and events that were most often inexplicable to the ancients: the cycle of life, the astronomical phenomena, the seasonal cycle and the fertility of the land, the sea, etc.





CONDITION

No restorations or repairs; only the tips of the feet (probably directed downwards) broken. Abrasions in the notch between the legs and shadows in very slight relief indicating the “paint ghosts” of where the eyes were painted (left side of the face).

PROVENANCE

Ex- US private collection, acquired on the New York art market, November 28, 1975; US private collection, NY, 2015.

EXHIBITED

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, 1987;
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, 1988;
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California
Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California, 1988.

PUBLISHED

GETZ-PREZIOSI P. (ed.), *Early Cycladic Art in North American Collections*, Richmond (Virginia), 1987, pp. 200-201, no. 52.

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THIMME J. (ed.), *Kunst der Kykladen*, Karlsruhe, 1975.



6

Figure of a man

Egyptian, Late Period, ca. 7th – 4th century B.C.

Wood, pigments

H: 59.0 cm (23.2 in)

This exceptionally sculpted and preserved large wooden figure is supported by a rectangular base carved in a single piece with the tip of the left foot. It portrays an important man in a traditional striding pose. His left leg is placed forward, while both arms are held stiffly at the sides. Each hand is clenched around an enigmatic cylindrical object. The figure appears to be bald, although the presence of a wig cannot be excluded. His tanned skin is painted in red-brown, his eyes are highlighted with black pigment.

The man is dressed in a short loincloth (the shendyt, provided here with a small flap), held by a thick waistband. The white, unpleated skirt perfectly hugs his buttocks and thighs, but is more rigid in the front. His face has a “smiling” expression, largely widespread in contemporary Egyptian representations, with the corners of the mouth slightly raised. Although it is not a real somatic portrait, the features are clearly marked (prominent nose, high cheekbones, full lips, weak chin) and, as often seen in the private iconography of the time, they are differentiated from the images depicting other individuals.

Such statuettes most often represented a high-level dignitary or a priest; but, even the humblest tombs included wooden funeral furniture. These figures were placed in the serdab, the area specifically reserved for the statues of the deceased, they acted as an alternative resting-place for his/her spirit in the event of damage to the physical body. They would also receive the funerary offerings, especially foodstuffs.

Small wooden statuettes were often placed in the tombs from the late Old Kingdom onward, and all throughout the 2nd millennium. In the 1st millennium, this practice regained its impetus, especially in the Saite period, as attested by this outstanding example.

CONDITION

No restorations or repairs; some chips, minor cracks; abundant remains of red, white and black paint.

PROVENANCE

Formerly private collection, England, acquired prior to 14 April 1939; thence by descent, private family collection, UK.

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7

Jupiter Tonans

Gallo-Roman, ca. 1st – 2nd century A.D.

Bronze (solid cast), silver, copper

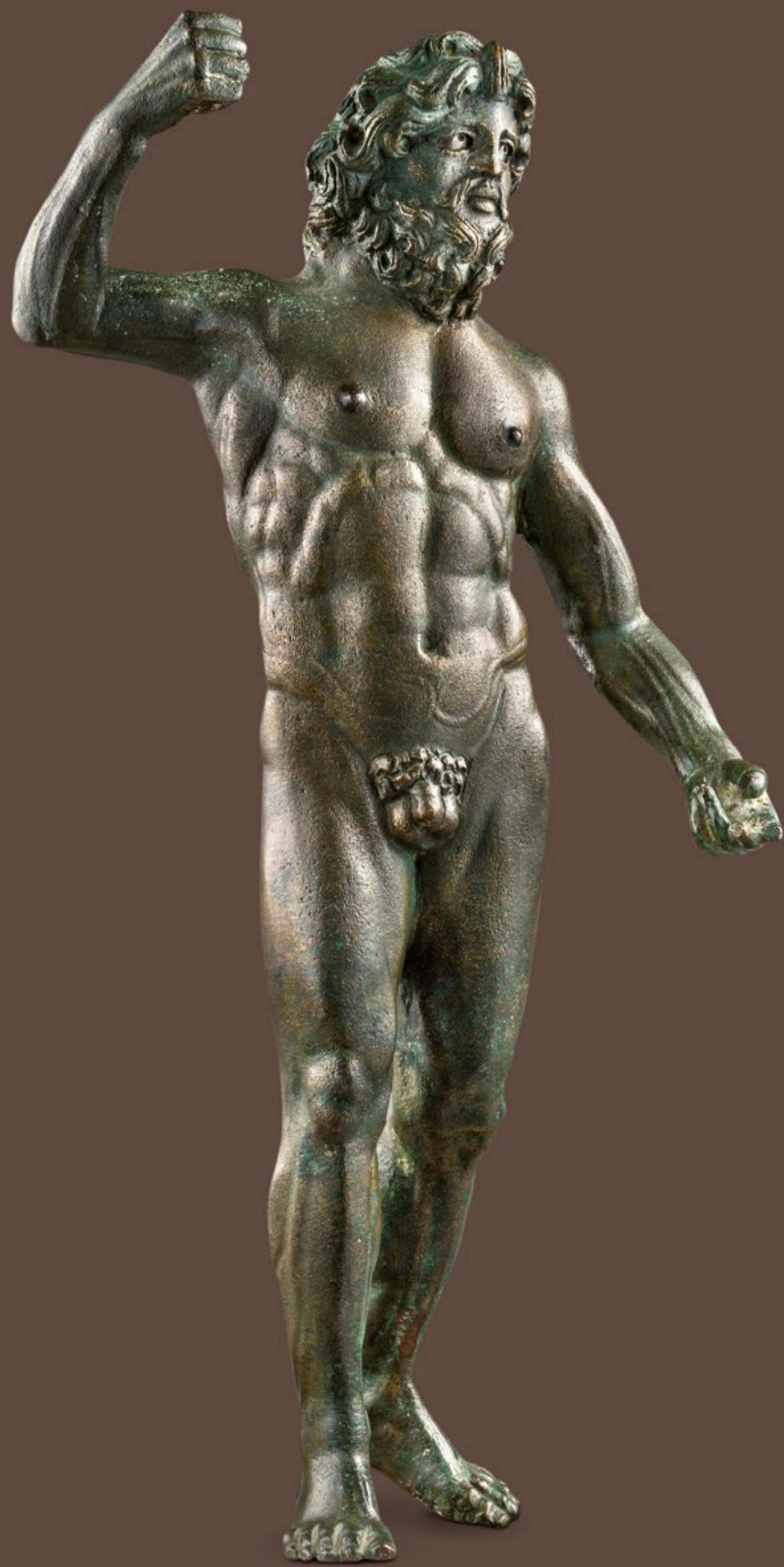
H: 33.6 cm (13.2 in)

An imposing nude figure represents the supreme god of the Romans, Jupiter. Of mature age, with abundant curly hair arranged with a diadem and a long beard, the powerful Olympian exposes his ideally built muscular body in an assured pose. The inlaid large eyes made of silver and the red copper used for the nipples, a precise chiseling of individual hair locks mark this exquisite work by a Gallo-Roman bronze maker, whose successful workshop should be in one of the North-Western provinces of the Empire.

The images of the god presented on Roman coins and among the statuettes with surviving attributes help to reconstruct the complete composition of the figure designated as *Jupiter in Majesty*: standing with the weight on one leg the figure raises one arm to hold a long scepter and lowers the other bent arm, which holds the thunderbolt. Such was the look of the monumental cult statue of Jupiter Tonans (*the Thunderer*) in his Roman temple near the Capitoline Hill, which was dedicated by Augustus in 22 B.C. The story was recorded by Suetonius (*Vita Augusti* 29.91): “He [Augustus] dedicated the shrine to Jupiter the Thunderer because of a narrow escape; for on his Cantabrian expedition during a march by night, a flash of lightning grazed his litter and struck the slave dead who was carrying a torch before him”. Allegedly, the statue inside the temple was that of Zeus Brontaios, a 4th century B.C. Greek masterwork by Leochares, of which a Roman marble statue in the Prado is considered a faithful replica. The monumental statue in Rome was highly praised

and copied several times in a variety of media and size. The smaller replicas and their molds were diffused in the provincial workshops to serve models for the local bronze makers, who also replicated it in the mirror image, as this statuette presents.

The rendering of anatomy of a well-trained body is remarkable; the emphasis on the groups of muscles of bulging rounded shapes, especially noticeable at the back, is complemented with more detailed depiction of strained muscles of the abdomen, arms, and lower legs. Another particular feature of modeling is the fine delineation coming along both sides of the torso to lower abdomen in curving and crossing double lines. This decorative motive should be understood as a designation of a heroic cuirass (a metal cuirass with naturalistically-modelled musculature, often represented in the marble statues of Roman emperors and generals). The combination of the naked body and the motive is unusual; it was probably conceived as an allusion to the image of Jupiter Dolichenus (*Jupiter optimus maximus Dolichenus*). This specific cult of Jupiter (sometimes addressed as “eternal preserver”), with his image completely dressed and armed, originated in the Roman East (the epithet derives from the Syrian city of Doliche) and widespread in the 2nd -3rd century A.D. throughout the western provinces, becoming especially popular and important in the military areas. Remains of several temples and shrines dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus were recorded by the archaeologists in different parts of the Empire.



This statuette is an extraordinary sculpture considering its greater than average size. It could have been a valuable ex-voto dedicated to the sanctuary of the god. The original base of the figure was not preserved; it could have the inscription mentioning the name and titles of a donor. The statuette could also be placed in a lararium, a home shrine, among the images of other deities and spirits considered as family patrons and guards. A commission and purchase of a larger and more expensive bronze figure would make a dedication more significant. As the complexes of figurines found in the better-known Pompeiian lararia demonstrate, they were composed of the statuettes distinguished by size, normally with the images of principal deities larger than the others.

CONDITION

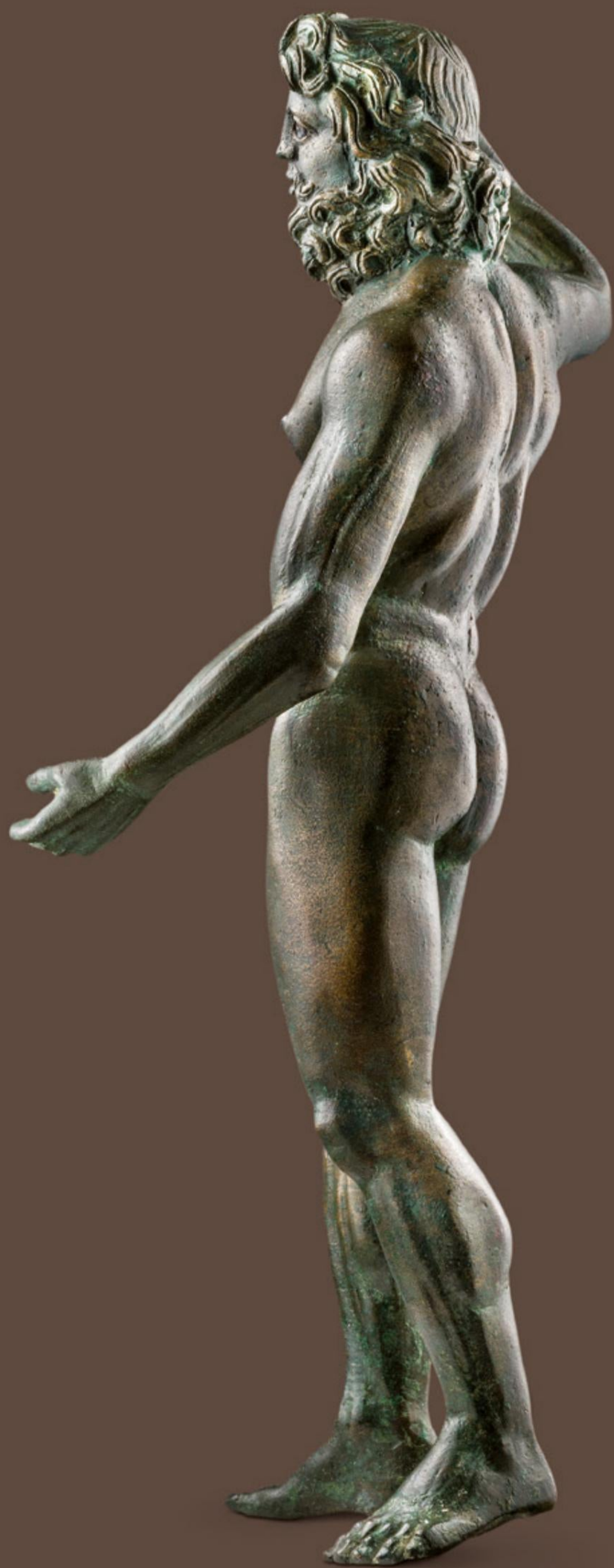
Gold-brown patina with some green oxidation; missing are two fingertips of the left hand.

PROVENANCE

Ex- Georges Halphen private collection, Paris, acquired prior to 1995.

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8

The Catherine the Great fountain

Ex- Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779), Thomas Jenkins (1722–1798)
and Lyde Browne (d.1787)

Roman, first half of the 1st century A.D.

Marble

H: 74.9 cm (29.4 in)

This ancient Roman fountain group represents a chubby nude boy comfortably seated on the side of a dolphin's back, his legs crossed and leaning with his left arm on the dolphin's head. The boy's head, with long and wavy locks, is bent downwards, as if he is watching the ride over the waves. The waves are carved in relief on the sculpture's base, where a fish is seen below the dolphin's tail. The right arm is not preserved; the analogous sculptures (in the Munich Glyptothek and the Musée Bardo, Tunis)¹ attest that it

was probably elevated to touch the locks of hair, while the elbow was supported by the raised, cork-screwed tail of the dolphin. The sculpture was carved entirely from a single block of marble; all parts of the composition are connected to form a solid shape. It is a remarkable example of fountain sculpture: the dolphin's muzzle has a wide drilled aperture, from where the water, supplied by a metallic pipe hidden by the cavity on the bottom of the piece, gushed into a fountain's basin.

THE DRAWING, 1763

The drawing from the collection of the Society of Antiquaries in London was published by R. S. Pierce in 1965 in his article on the drawings by the British artist and dealer of antiquities in Rome, Thomas Jenkins². Sent from Rome to London, it was presented at the Society meeting on November 10, 1763 by the collector Lyde Browne, who was a member. The inscription on the sheet, most probably made by the Society's secretary, states: "An antique group of a boy on a Dolphin purchased by Mr Jenkins of Card. Albani for Lyde Browne 1763. Boissard mentions such a one in Card. Valle's collection". Pierce identified the artwork in the early catalog of the Lyde Browne collection of 1768 (published in Latin): "Statua pueri in monstrum marinum insidentis; opere eleganti", although he did not attempt to identify it among the entries in the later catalog of 1779³.

The drawing shows the dolphin with an exaggerated long tail spread on the side, without the connection to the boy's elbow, as it is attested in the Roman sculptures mentioned above. This fact makes it likely that the drawing presents a restored tail. Compared to the drawing, the tail on the statue is much shorter, which allows for a possible second restoration. In its present condition, the sculpture lacks the restored right arm. The restoration was probably executed by the sculptor Carlo Antonio Napolioni, who supervised and restored the pieces from the cardinal Albani collection⁴.





CARDINAL ALESSANDRO ALBANI

The information from the drawing's inscription regarding the collection of cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779) and the reference to cardinal Andrea della Valle (1463-1534) have a predominant importance for the history of collecting antiquities in the Eternal City. A nephew of Pope Clement XI, Alessandro Albani became a cardinal when he was 29 years old. He started to collect early, with the guidance of the Pope's antiquary Marcantonio Sabbatini, and Francesco Bianchini, a prominent scholar and archaeologist, nominated as the President of the antiquities of Rome; and Albani himself conducted archaeological excavations during several years in different areas of Rome and in its environs (Lavinium, Tusculum, Tivoli, Porto d'Anzio (Nettuno). With his privileged position, he was able to acquire antiquities from the old noble collections of Rome (such as the della Valle, Cesi, Gaetani-Ruspoli, Aldobrandini, Pamphilj, Giustiniani, Verospi-Vitelleschi, Carpegna collection). In 1728, he had already sold a part of his collection to the King of Saxony, Augustus the Strong. In 1733, pope Clement XII bought a major part of his sculptures, which became the nucleus of the Capitoline Museum. Albani sold his collection of medals to the Vatican Library in 1738, and his important collection of drawings after the Antique, previously owned by dal Pozzo, was sold to the British King George III in 1762⁵. Cardinal Albani was also contemplating dealing in antiquities, especially for British collectors, and there is good reason to suppose that Lyde Browne was introduced to him during Browne's first Grand Tour in 1753-1754. In addition to a few Albani family properties in Rome, and a villa in Anzio (with some antiquities from the cardinal's excavations there)⁶, the properties main residence was the Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane, built in the 16th century by the cardinal Camillo Massimi and having belonged to the cardinal Francesco Nerli – Albani had acquired the collection of the latter, which included the antiquities of the former. The contemporary descriptions of the palazzo specifically emphasized the antique sculptures in the Alessandro's quarters⁷.

The famous villa Albani on the via Salaria, conceived in the 1740's, built in the 1750's and opened in 1763, was decorated with more than 500 ancient busts, statues, and bas-reliefs, a phenomenal quantity for a private collection⁸. Due to its delicate size, one may assume, the fountain group of a boy on a dolphin was not considered appropriate for the installation in a grand villa, and it was sold by the owner at that same time.

The references to Boissard and cardinal della Valle in the drawing's inscription likely go back to the information obtained from Albani himself and his erudite librarian and curator of the collection, J. J. Winckelmann. The book by Boissard, where a statue of a boy on a sea monster-dolphin is mentioned, was published in 1597⁹. At first, one would think that the Albani statue originated from the Renaissance collection of the della Valle family¹⁰. The della Valle, who had already started to collect in the early 15th century, owned a celebrated collection prominently displayed in the courtyard and, with the expansion undertaken by Andrea della Valle, in the hanging garden of the palace in Rome. At the time, it was not only described but also drawn by the artists Amico Aspertini, Francisco de Holanda, and Martin van Heemskerck¹¹. Indeed, the representation of Eros on a dolphin was recognized in a drawing by Aspertini in the British Museum (dated ca. 1535)¹², which shows a different composition as compared to that of the Albani sculpture. The della Valle collection was eventually acquired by the Medici and housed at the Uffizi. It is also noteworthy that the 16th century descriptions of the statue (Boissard, Aldrovandi) employ such designations as "the sea monster" and "the dolphin" in the same sense, as it appeared in the 18th century catalogs¹³.

LYDE BROWNE, THE ENGLISH COINNESSEUR AND COLLECTOR

Lyde Browne (date of birth not known, d. 1787) was a successful financier in London, one of the directors of the Bank of England, and a keen collector of antiquities. He was a member of the Society of Antiquaries and the Society of Dilettanti. Sharing mutual interests with one of the most important collectors of the 18th century, Charles Townley, he became a consistent client of Thomas Jenkins, also buying from Gavin Hamilton in Rome. Brown traveled twice in Italy on the Grand Tour to make purchases, in 1753 and 1776-1778, visiting Turin, Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples. The collection formed over three decades was displayed in his country house and the garden in Wimbledon (now gone) and catalogued twice, in 1768 and 1779. The latter lists 260 pieces divided into principal sections reflecting the diverse types of ancient Roman sculpture: heads, vases, bas-reliefs, candelabra, medallions, figural supports, columns and pedestals, busts, sarcophagi/sepulchral urns and statues. The catalog entries provide significant information on the provenance of the pieces from old patrician collections in Rome, such as Giustiniani, Mattei, Barberini, Verospi, and Albani. A few pieces were acquired from the collection of cardinal M. de Poligniac. During his lifetime, Browne sold some pieces to the Earl of Bessborough, Earl of Carlisle, Lord Egremont, and the Marquis of Rockingham. The statue of *Paris* from the Rockingham's Wentworth Woodhouse later found its way to the J. Paul Getty Museum¹⁴, while a few pieces from the Townley collection, today in the British Museum, were obtained by him from Lyde Browne. Lyde Browne eventually sold his remarkable collection of antique sculpture to the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great¹⁵. After his death, the remainder of the art assemblage was auctioned at Christie's on 30 May 1788.

The second catalog of the Lyde Browne collection (published in Italian in 1779) lists four sculptures under the title "a putto on a dolphin/monster", which establishes the researcher's challenge of attributing pieces bearing identical or similar names. Entry 11 of the catalog's part "Statues" reads: "A putto mounted on a dolphin, a beautiful group well preserved, bought from the Duc Colombrano in Naples". This sculpture is now in the Hermitage Museum¹⁶. The united record of 29 and 30 finds: "Two putti mounted on the sea monsters, beautiful and well preserved; the one that is for the fountain use, was before at the villa Albani, another comes from Naples"¹⁷. The catalog entry 29 undoubtedly refers to the present sculpture. Entry 40: "A group of a drowned putto on the back of a dolphin..., work by Lorenzetto", is also now at the Hermitage¹⁸.

CATHERINE THE GREAT

In 1782, sometime before the final sale of the Lyde Browne collection to Catherine II, there was a visit by the Marquese Giuseppe Rondinini (most probably, mediated by their mutual acquaintance Charles Townley) to Lyde Browne's villa in Wimbledon. There, 16 pieces were selected to be offered to the Russian Empress¹⁹. The list includes "A Cupid Riding on a Dolphin, the right hand, nose, and the tail of Dolphin restored" and "a Ditto riding on a sea monster, one arm, nose, tail and head of the monster restored". As it happened, the Browne collection was delivered to Russia in two shipments in 1783-1784. The number of pieces for the first delivery, arriving in St. Petersburg in October 1783, was increased from 16 to 28, and did not contain these sculptures; they arrived with the second shipment in 1784, priced at 854 rubles (i.e. each at £70)²⁰.

Catherine II never considered the Hermitage in St. Petersburg as an appropriate location for the entire Browne collection since there was insufficient room for such a quantity of pieces in the narrow galleries along the Hanging Garden, which were mostly reserved for paintings. She favoured

installing them at Tsarskoe Selo, her summer residence near the capital, and not in the grand palace (famous for its Amber Room) but rather in the park pavilions. The Tsarskoe Selo list of sculptures, composed on 30 May 1787 (the first known to us from that period)²¹ names four statues as “A boy seated on a monster”, “Cupid seated on a monster”, “A boy on a serpent”, “A boy on a dolphin”. The present statue should be associated with the first one, “A boy seated on a monster”, as it was already titled in the catalog of 1768. In Catherine’s time, the statue was installed in the Grotto (Morning Hall), a magnificent Baroque style pavilion near the pond, spacious and full of light, designed by the Italian architect F. B. Rastrelli.

PAUL I AND VINCENZO BRENNI

Upon Catherine’s death in 1796 her son, Paul I, ordered the removal of all sculptures from Tsarskoe Selo to his own residences located in Pavlovsk and Gatchina near St. Petersburg and the Winter Palace and Michael’s Castle in St Petersburg. The court architect, Vincenzo Brenna, was charged with the task, and retained some sculptures to display at his own house in St Petersburg (a fact recorded by a contemporary who noted seeing there the famous “Crouching Boy” by Michelangelo, a sculpture also from the Lyde Browne collection listed in the Tsarskoe Selo inventories)²². Brenna was not re-appointed as a court architect after Paul’s death, and he left Russia in 1802. The St Petersburg newspaper announced several auctions of his art holdings from 1801-1802.²³

EROS OR BOY?

In addition to the historical significance and important provenance from his best rank of European collections of classical sculpture, the marble group of a boy seated on a dolphin is extremely interesting as an example of Roman fountain sculpture. The representation itself as an art motif is linked to that of Eros riding a dolphin, which is based on the mythological story of the birth of Aphrodite from sea foam, as told in several poetic versions. Explaining why the island of Cyprus is shaped like a dolphin, the late Roman period poet Nonnus writes: “For when the fertile drops from Uranos, spilt with a mess of male gore, had given infant shape to the fertile foam and brought forth the Paphian, to the land of horned Cypros came a dolphin over the deep, which with intelligent mind carried Aphrodite perched on his mane” (*Dionysiaca* XII, 432; transl. W. A. D. Rouse). Aphrodite’s ride on the sea was accompanied by a festive cortege of sea creatures and Erotes astride the dolphins: “Over the silver [of the sea] on dancing dolphins ride guileful Love and laughing Desire (Anacreontea, 57; transl. David A. Campbell).

Within this context, a single figure of Eros riding a dolphin becomes a familiar image in Greek vase painting, glyptic, terracottas and reliefs of the late Classical-Hellenistic period²⁴, as well as on Roman coins of the Late Republican period. The composition varies greatly, the figure of Eros could be positioned astride the back of the dolphin, or on its side (the amazon pose), or even back to front, with varying choices of attributes in his arms (a parasol, a trident, a wreath, a torch, phiale, a seashell). The multigure depictions of the sea procession reach from the late Hellenistic into the Imperial period on mosaics and marble sarcophagi, also including an especially interesting example as the reliefs on the sole of the sandals of a colossal statue in the Capitoline Museum²⁵.

An independent iconography of a young man astride the dolphin appears on the coins of Tarent, the Greek colony in Magna Graecia, since the Late Archaic period. The story tells us that Taras, son of Poseidon, was shipwrecked and rescued by his father sending him a dolphin, who brought Taras to the shore, where the hero founded the city bearing his name, Taras (Latin *Tarentum*, today’s *Taranto*).



A FOUNTAIN SCULPTURE

As for the sculpture in the round, it was assumed the motif was established in the 3rd century B.C.²⁶ A three-dimensional representation of Eros riding a dolphin did appear in the Hellenistic sculpture in a specific form of a statue's support in the marble figures of Aphrodite; the Medici Venus is accompanied by two tiny Erotes riding a dolphin supporting her left leg (second half of the 1st century B.C., the Uffizi)²⁷. In such representations of the goddess, the usual motif of a vessel with drapery as the figure's support (referring to the sacred ritual of lustration) was transformed into the motif of her birth from the sea as symbolized by a dolphin with Eros. The fountain sculpture has adopted the Aphrodite imagery and several statues of Venus of the Roman Imperial period are actual fountains having their figural supports with the dolphin's mouth serving as a waterspout²⁸.

The independent fountain figures of Eros riding a dolphin came to be known after the finds in Pompeii and dated to the 1st century B.C. – 1st century A.D. Both of bronze and marble, their size is usually small, with spouts to produce thin jets of water (saving the water, and even taps on the pipes to allow for regulation of water supply for use in Pompeian households). With the technical evolution and gradual expanding use of pressurized water throughout the provinces of the Roman empire, fountain figures became much larger, with wider waterspouts. The composition of such figures allowed for individual designs, suggesting that there was not an established prototype to be reproduced: there is a figure of a standing Eros holding a dolphin on his shoulder, Eros rescued by a dolphin from an octopus, Eros astride a dolphin, and as a variant, Eros, or a boy, semi-reclining on the back, or seated on the side of the dolphin's back, which is the case for this sculpture. The modelling of marble with soft transitions, especially characteristic for the boy's face, along with the selected use of drilling noticeable in the treatment of his feet and toes, would date the sculpture to the first half of the 1st century A.D. The marble figures of a putto with a mask, one found in Sperlonga and another one in Anzio, provide good parallels for the workmanship of the beginning – first half of the 1st century²⁹. Interestingly, the piece from Anzio (the Capitoline Museums) was discovered in the excavations of the Roman Imperial villa (called Nero's villa in the 18th century) maintained by cardinal Alessandro Albani.

THE PLINY STORY

Derived from the Eros/dolphin iconography, this sculpture does not represent the young god of love but a boy, which was correctly described in the 18th century catalogs. There are no wings, necessary for the divine image, and his hairstyle is atypical. Composed of thick locks, the hair has one long tress seen at the neck. The explanation can be found in the study of Greek and Roman representations of boys with a similar coiffure, as the symbol of their tender age and the future rite of passage, when the tress, as a token of a childhood vow, would be cut off³⁰.

At some point, the subject of a boy and a dolphin became very popular in Latin literature. Pliny the Elder, writing that the dolphin is an animal friendly to man, tells a very touching story of the friendship between a dolphin and a boy: the dolphin would carry the boy on his back over the sea to his school at Puteoli and home again; when a few years later, the boy died from some illness, the dolphin soon died of profound grief (*Natural History*, IX 8). Pliny made references to earlier Latin writers who told the same story, and still later, in the early 3rd century A.D., a very beautiful re-telling was made by Aelian in his work *On the Nature of the Animals* 6, 15. Pliny, exploring the variants of the story which have happened in different parts of the Mediterranean at different periods, supplies

his story with very precise chronological and topographical data – it happened in the time of Augustus at the Lucrinus Lacus (Lucrine Lake) situated between Baia and Puteoli (today's Pozzuoli). The place was known as Portus Julius founded by Agrippa in 37 B.C., who built the canal to connect the lake with the sea at the Gulf of Cumae. At the same time, the area became highly attractive for the construction of the wealthy Romans villas with pleasure gardens (among them, a villa of Cicero). The lasting of the legend in literary tradition coincides with the period when fountain sculptures were produced to decorate the gardens of Roman houses and villas. A local Campanian workshop could be the inventor and designer of the group "A Boy on a Dolphin" based on the regional popularity of the story. A cultivated owner of a villa might tell the story to his guests while presenting an outdoor sculptural décor. A fountain piece, whose subject matter is related to a much honored literary source, would be the perfect thing for such an erudite discussion.

CONDITION

Excellent condition; superficial wear throughout; surface of the marble has been cleaned; 18th century restoration to the tail; right arm missing; two cracks on left arm have been filled for reinforcement; some encrustation around the dolphin.

PROVENANCE

Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779) collection, Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome;
Thomas Jenkins (1722-1798), Rome;
Lyde Brown (d. 1787) collection, Wimbeldon, London, 1763;
Catherine the Great (1729-1796) collection, installed in the Grotto (Morning Hall) of her summer residence, Tsarskoe Selo, Russia, 1784; thence by descent;
Paul I (1754 – 1801) collection, Winter Palace, Pavlovsk Palace and Michael's Castle in St. Petersburg and Gatchina Palace, Russia, 1796;
Probably, Vincenzo Brenna, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1801;
(The St Petersburg newspaper announced several auctions of Brenna's art holdings from 1801-1802, Princess Helena Radziwiłł of Poland bought from said auctions and shipped other marbles from St. Petersburg to Poland in 1801 and 1802. The princess' purchases also bear the Lyde Brown provenance and were also recorded as being in the Tsarskoe Selo inventory);

UK Private collection, London;
Albrecht Neuchaus, Würzburg, Germany, acquired on or before 9 November 1973;
Swiss private collection, acquired on or before 28 January 1974;
US private collection, acquired on the New York art market, 2003.

PUBLISHED

Drawing by Thomas Jenkins, Society of Antiquaries, London, 10 November 1763;
Catalogus veteris aevi varii generis monumentorum quae Cimeliarchio Lyde Browne, Arm. Ant. Soc. Soc. Apud Wimbeldon asservantur, 1768, p. 7, no. 33;
Catalogo Dei piu Scelti e Preciosi marmi, che si conservano nella galleria del Sigr Lyde Browne, Cavaliere Inglese a Wimbeldon, Nella Contea di Surrey, London, 1779, p. 30, no. 29;
YAKOVKIN I., *History of Tsarskoe Selo*, St Petersburg, 1829, pp. 295 (in Russian);
PIERCE R. S., *Thomas Jenkins in Rome in the light of Letters, Records and Drawings at the Society of Antiquaries of London*, in *The Antiquaries Journal* 45 (2), 1965, p. 227, pl. LXIII a.



*“By 1787, the fountain was installed
in Catherine the Great’s summer
residence in the grotto near the pond.”*

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- ² PIERCE R. S., *Thomas Jenkins in Rome in the light of Letters, Records and Drawings at the Society of Antiquaries of London*, in *The Antiquaries Journal* 45 (2), 1965, p. 227, pl. LXIII a.
- ³ *Catalogus veteris aevi varii generis monumentorum quae Cimeliarchio Lyde Browne, Arm. Ant. Soc. Soc. Apud Wimbledon asservantur*, 1768, p. 7, no. 33.
- ⁴ ARATA F. P., *Carlo Antonio Napolioni (1675-1742) "celebre restauratore delle cose antiche". Uno scultore romano al servizio del Museo Capitolino*, in *Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 99, 1998, pp. 153-232.
- ⁵ RÖTTGEN S., *Alessandro Albani*, in BECK H., BOL P. C., eds., *Forschungen zur Villa Albani: antike Kunst und die Epoche der Aufklärung*, Berlin, 1982, pp. 123-152. GASPARRI C., *Marmi antichi nella Villa Albani-Torlonia: appunti per una storia della raccolta*, in STEUBEN H. von, LAHUSEN G., KOTSIDU H., eds., *Mouseion; Beiträge zur antiken Plastik: Festschrift für Peter Cornelis Bol*, Mönsee, 2007, pp. 76-79.
- ⁶ CACCIOTTI B., *Gli scavi di antichità del cardinale Alessandro Albani ad Anzio*, in *Bollettino dei Musei comunali di Roma* 15, 2001, p. 36.
- ⁷ DELFINI G., *Il Palazzo alle "Quattro Fontane"*, in *Committenze della famiglia Albani, Note sulla Villa Albani Torlonia*, in *Studi sul Settecento romano* 1/2. Roma, 1985, pp. 87-89. FUSCONI G., *Un taccuino di disegni di Raymond Lafage e il palazzo alle Quattro Fontane di Roma*, in *Camillo Massimo collezionista di antichità: fonti e materiale*, *Xenia Antiqua*, Monografie 3, Roma, 1996, pp. 49-50. CACCIOTTI B., *La collezione Albani nel Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane: "un affare glorioso per il papa e di beneficio per Roma"*, in DODERO E, PARISI PRESICCE C., eds., *Il Tesoro di Antichità: Winckelmann e il Museo Capitolino nella Roma del Settecento*, Roma, 2017, pp. 73-86.
- ⁸ ALLROGEN-BEDEL A., *Die Antikensammlung in der Villa Albani zur Zeit Winckelmanns*, in BECK H., BOL P. C., eds., *Forschungen zur Villa Albani*, pp. 303-380. LIEBENWEIN W., *Die Villa Albani und die Geschichte der Kunstsammlungen*, in BECK H., BOL P. C., eds., *Forschungen zur Villa Albani*, pp. 461-505.
- ⁹ BOISARD J. J., *I Pars Romanae Urbis Topographiae & Antiquitatum*, Frankfurt am Main, 1597, p. 43.
- ¹⁰ So did O. Neverov - NEVEROV O., *The Lyde Browne Collection and the History of Ancient Sculpture in the Hermitage Museum*, in *American Journal of Archaeology* 88 (1), 1984. Vol. 88, p. 40 and note 88.
- ¹¹ BOBER P. P., RUBINSTEIN R. O., *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, Oxford, New York, 1991, pp. 479-480. MAGISTER S., *Censimento delle collezioni di antichità a Roma (1471-1503): Addenda*, in *Xenia Antiqua* X, 2001, pp. 122-124. WREN CHRISTIAN K., *Instauratio and Pietas: The della Valle Collections of Ancient Sculpture*, in PENNY N., SCHMIDT E. D., eds., *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe. Studies in the History of Art* 70, New Haven, London, 2008, pp. 33-65.
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9

Sarcophagus panel

Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 21, ca. 1000 B.C.

Wood, gesso, pigments, varnish

L: 28.7 cm (11.2 in) – H: 20.6 cm (8.1 in)

The fragment belonged to a wooden anthropoid sarcophagus shaped as a mummiform figure wearing a tripartite wig, with arms crossed over the chest. Typically for the art of the New Kingdom, the scenes representing the Underworld deities, hieroglyphic texts, and ornamental elements richly decorated the sarcophagus' front. This panel represents the god Amun-Re inside his shrine. In front of him, there is a small table with the offerings and the god Thot (identified by his baboon head), who is presenting him the eye "oudjat".

Amun-Re is accompanying by Heka, the powerful god of magic, who is behind. The divinities are standing on a solar boat, which is guided by the pilot holding the rudder formed by two oars and surmounted by falcon heads; himself, he is adorned with the falcon head. Above, there is a prominent depiction of the winged eye. The hieroglyphs marked by thickly applied paints, and the whole scene rendered in yellow, red, green, and black is carefully defined.

CONDITION

Affixed to a new frame; an ancient hole at the bottom; a few cracks and minor losses of paint; a few small holes for previous mounting at the back; uneven thickness and traces of sawing; old inventory number in black ink: "N: E.565".

PROVENANCE

Ex- R. Liechti private collection (1934–2010), Geneva, Switzerland acquired from Salle des Ventes, rue de Hesses, Geneva, 1975.

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10

Head of the Ares Borghese statue

Roman, late 1st – early 2nd century A.D.

Marble

H: 46.3 cm (18.2 in)

The over life-size head belonged to a statue designated as the Ares Borghese type. One of the most famous in the history of Classical sculpture, the Ares Borghese statue in the Louvre was purchased by Napoleon with the Borghese collection in Rome in 1807. It represents a standing youth, nude except for a helmet (according to the reconstruction of the prototype's composition, he held a spear and a shield in his left arm). The athletic body put in a still and confident pose is impressive of well-articulated musculature. The youth stands with his free leg advanced diagonally and the head inclined to the side, glance to the ground. His hairstyle is characteristic with long strands visible at the nape and especially on the sides in front of the ears. The young man is beardless; the curly locks of side whiskers at the jaws could be a sign of his still young age.

The attribution of the figure to Ares, the god of war, proposed by J. J. Winckelmann already in 1767, has been later associated with Pausanias report on the statue of Ares by sculptor Alkamenes installed in his temple in the Athenian Agora (*Description of Greece* 1, 8, 4). The identification was widely accepted by the scholarship, although other Greek heroes, Achilles, Paris, and Theseus, were named for the statue's image. Created around 430-400 B.C., the sculpture received great recognition among the Roman connoisseurs. Among a number of replicas there are such specific sculptures which transform the cult image of Ares into a portrait statue of an individual. An example of how sig-

nificant the Classical model was considered in the Roman period is demonstrated by a group of Mars and Venus (the Louvre) which presents the allegorical portraits of the Emperor Hadrian and his wife Sabina (later her portrait was substituted with the portrait of Lucilla, wife of the Emperor Lucius Verus). The male figure adopts the Ares Borghese type; Hadrian was represented in the guise of the god of war, the guarantor of the peace and prosperity of the Empire, according to the official propaganda.

The reliefs on the helmet are clearly presented. The linear pattern is combined with figural and ornamental motives: there is a heraldic composition of two dogs on either side of a central palmette with scrolling tendrils; the half palmettes adorn the peak and are placed above the volutes. The design is based on a strict and precise symmetry. As for the dogs with long snouts, short ears, long tails, and sleek bodies, they were identified as of Lakonian, or Spartan, breed. Their presence on the helmet of Ares was also explained in regard of the fragment by Pausanias, in which the writer reports on the sacrifice at Sparta of puppies dedicated to Ares (*Description of Greece* 3, 14, 9).

The figural decoration on each side of the cranium is identical including the representations of winged griffins. The anatomical details of the beaks, paws, feathers of these fantastic beasts were skillfully rendered in low relief. The iconographical motive became popular in the middle of the 5th century B.C., with the appearance of

griffins on the helmet of Athena Parthenos by Phidias. A contemporary depiction of a standard Attic helmet decorated with griffins is found on the red-figure vase of ca. 440 B.C. attributed to the Lykaon Painter (the Metropolitan Museum of Art).

The Ares Borghese, a Roman marble replica of the Greek bronze original by Alkamenos, is dated to the 1st–2nd century A.D. As often in the Roman copying of Greek originals, the alterations, changes or additions of details became a common practice. One can think that the substitution of the Attic helmet with the cheekguards for a Hellenistic variant without them was necessitated by the idea to show wholly the handsome face of the young god. The Louvre statue is over-life size (2.11 m high), which is obviously the case for the present head. Because of the size, the head was carved separately from the body.

CONDITION

Tip of nose broken off; a few chips and dents; edges of ears damaged; surface severely worn (cheeks, nose, forehead, visor); remains of encrustation on the chin and at back.

PROVENANCE

Ex- Sir Francis Sacheverell Darwin 1786-1859), Sydnop Hall, Two Dales, Matlock, Derbyshire; ex- Spink and Son, London, 1950s; US private collection, New Jersey, acquired on the NY art market, 2008.

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Trefoil Oinochoe

Greek, Corinthian, ca. 600 B.C.

Terracotta, pigments

H : 36.8 cm (14.5 in)

This elegant and cleanly potted black-figure jug with trefoil mouth (*oinochoe*) has a great precision of forms which undoubtedly refers to a metallic prototype. Its complex pictorial design was made by the incision lines and added red for the details. The foot, handle, neck and mouth are black-glaze. The decoration of the lower part of the vase consists of rays beautifully rendered above the foot, which has concentric circles underneath. The rest of the body is divided into three broad friezes with animal and bird motives.

The upper frieze represents a goose, a lion, two deer, and a panther. The central frieze has larger figures, with confronting lion and bull below the handle. Beside a single figure of a bird, two lions and two sphinxes are arranged symmetrically on the side of central image, a Sirene with wide-spread wings. The Sirens were sea monsters, with a head of a young girl and the body of a bird, that used a bewitching song to drag sailors to their deaths. Formerly, these sirens were handmaidens of the goddess Persephone but after her abduction Demeter transformed them giving them wings to search for the lost goddess. Hades was responsible for stealing her from Earth and bringing her to the Underworld. This inhibited the sirens from finding her and ultimately settled on the island of Anthemoessa where they would target passing sailors. The lower frieze has figures of two lions, boar, panther, deer, bird, and goat. The animals

are depicted in their characteristic attitudes: lion with roaring mouth, goat and deer grazing, lowering their heads toward the ground, while the panther's head is expressively turned to the front.

Because of the horizontal composition, figures in friezes received elongated bodies. A competent artist employed fine incision lines to shape the variety of anatomical details characteristic of different figures. A trademark of his personal manner is detected in the way of shaping the eye, a large circle with two tiny triangles to mark the inner and outer canthi. The added red-purple color was used to distinguish certain parts of the bodies. Besides the obvious decorative effect, the colored parts may contribute to the three-dimensional quality in otherwise completely graphic work. Empty spaces are filled with abundant rosettes, blobs and dots. This specific shape of a large jug with multi-figural friezes was particularly favored by Corinthian vase painters during the second half of the seventh – sixth century B.C.

During the Orientalizing period (ca. 700-580 B.C.), Corinth became an important center of the ceramic production, famous for its fine clay, intricate geometric and ornamental designs. Corinth was also an important port to trade in Greece; the terracotta containers like this have been exported to different parts of the Mediterranean.

“During the Orientalizing period, Corinth became an important center of the ceramic production, famous for its fine clay...”

CONDITION

Reassembled from fragments with filling the gaps and overpainting along the breaks; overpainting to the black band above the foot below the panther and goat; surface weathered, abrasions, minor losses of glaze; encrustation in places.

PROVENANCE

Ex- American family collection, New York, acquired from M. Simotti Rocchi, Rome, 1999; thence by descent.

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Aphrodite

Greek, Hellenistic, 2nd century B.C.

Terracotta, pigments

H: 54.0 cm (21.2 in)

The standing figure of the goddess is leaning upon a sculptural support, which let the body to accept a resting pose. The head is turned to her left side, and the movement of the body parts receives the curving lines. The goddess is, most probably, Aphrodite as the dress, a sleeveless chiton fastened with round clasps, with one "sleeve" slipped from the shoulder (and about to reopen the breast), is characteristic for the outfit of the goddess of sexual beauty and love. The long himation is wrapped around her lower body, the rounded shape of the overfold echoes the form of her lower abdomen, which the diaphanous chiton does not hide (the naval was marked in the modeling). According to female fashion of the Late Hellenistic period, the chiton is belted high, right below the breasts, with the belt bound in "the Herakles knot". With her raised right arm, the goddess held the hem of the cloak. She wears various pieces of jewelry: there is an armlet at her right shoulder, a strap necklace with the side pendants at the shoulder (one preserved, and the second is detected by its footprint), and an impressive diadem placed high over her abundant hair arranged in two scrolled buns at the nape.

The modeling of the facial features is remarkable, with characteristic softness in shaping the brows, cheeks, and, especially, the eyelids: the lower ones, relatively thick, have a very smooth transition, as the result, the expression becomes pensive, with "the wet look".

The type of the figure leaning at a support becomes popular composition in Greek sculpture of the Hellenistic period, well-attested by marble statues and statuettes. The support could be just a pillar, or it could receive a sculptural form (a figure standing on a base), which would be thematically related to the main image: Aphrodite and Priapus, or, like in this representation, Aphrodite and her "idol", her ancient statue. This figure wearing a tall crown (*polos*) was rendered in the Archaistic style (revealed by the diagonal overfold and "the swallow-tail" pattern of her garments).

CONDITION

Reassembled from fragments; losses along the seams; a dent in the chest; missing are: right front part of the diadem, locks on left side, left arm below shoulder, one of the necklace's pendants, right arm below elbow part of himation below right shoulder, part of left knee; lower part of chiton restored in painted plaster, the joint is chipped; some deposits in places; remains of white slip and red pigment. Original aperture at the back to facilitate the firing in the kiln.

PROVENANCE

Estate of an American artist, acquired in the 1970's on the New York art market.

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PICÓN C.A., HEMINGWAY S., eds., *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World*, New York, 2016, p. 165 no. 77.



13

Openwork vase stand

Greek, Melos, Geometric Period, ca. 8th century B.C.

Terracotta

H: 23.3 cm (9.1 in)

Beside several common shapes of vessels designed for eating, drinking, or storage of solids and liquids (bowl, cups, jars, amphorae, etc.), very early in the history, the Greek potters invented a few specific pottery shapes of different purposes, among them a stand to hold a vessel, which, otherwise, could not stand or would be unstable on its own. Before the firing in the kiln, this present stand was assembled from the parts made on the potter's wheel and cut to create the feet and the apertures in the second tier.

The entire surface was decorated with painted ornaments and figurative representations. The broad upper register received the key ornament, with the diagonal crossing inside the elements; a band below consists of checked rhomboids. A thinner band with similar but smaller rhomboids encircles the window apertures, which are all delineated. The wall between the apertures has three rhomboids placed vertically, while each partition above the four feet has the depiction of a stag and a fish between its legs. The feet themselves have the images of two confronting birds and the stars above and beneath them. The individual painter's manner is marked by the drawing of very long and thin legs of the animals and birds. Because of the uneven firing in a crowded kiln, one side of the stand's decoration got almost black, while the paint on the other side turned red.

CONDITION

Reassembled; surface weathered, some encrustation; a few chips; root marks.

PROVENANCE

Ex- Pierre & Claude Vérité private collection, Paris, France, acquired between 1930 and 1960.

PUBLISHED & EXHIBITED

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Colossal portrait of the emperor Theodosius the Great (A.D. 347–395)

Early Byzantine, late 4th century A.D.

Porphyry, glass

H: 51.0 cm (20.07 in)

This magnificent porphyry head is one of the most important and impressive vestiges of Roman art of the latest period of the Empire. The choice of stone, monumental size, and the diadem leaves no doubt that the portrait represents an emperor. The precision and detailing of shapes carved in this super-hard stone establishes the highest quality of modeling, which would be available only at the imperial workshop. The rounded shape of the bottom of the neck indicates that the head would have been inserted in a cavity prepared on the upper part of the torso of a colossal statue, either carved in white marble or porphyry.

The individual features captured in this head point out to the portrait of the emperor Theodosius I, byname Theodosius the Great. His iconography is established on the evidence in literary records, coin images, as well as the representation of his figure on a large ceremonial silver dish with the inscription (the *missorium* of Theodosius I, the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid; fig. 1), which was probably made in Constantinople in 388 for the tenth anniversary (*decennalia*) of his reign. He is clean shaven and has a prominent chin, long and thin curved nose, long arched brows above the large, wide-open eyes, and bags under the eyes (as seen on the coin portraits). The narrow oval shape of the face is characteristic for both the porphyry portrait and the emperor's head on the *missorium*. The hair is combed from the top toward the forehead and form the crescent-like strands, which is also quite typical for the hair-style of the late Roman emperors. Theodosius' hair is longer at

the neck, and in the present portrait the long curly whiskers make the emperor's look distinctive. The enormous eyes with carved irides and pupils placed closer to the upper lids look straight ahead; the solemn expression of the face strikes the viewer with the inner strength.

On all of the images of Theodosius I appearing on coins, medallions (Freer Gallery, Washington D.C.; fig. 2) and the *missorium* the emperor is represented wearing a distinctive crown, symbol of supreme power, with its richly ornamented diadem. The crown consists of two external rows of large pearls separated by a row of geometric elements. Originally in the sculptured diadem, the alternating rhomboid and rectangular elements were inlaid with color glass pieces, the surviving ones are green, red, light yellow, and clear glass with golden foil underneath: the decorative system demonstrates the consistency with the authentic pieces of the late Roman – early Byzantine jewelry.

Theodosius who became the Roman emperor of the Eastern provinces and then sole emperor of both East and West ruled from 379 to 395 A.D. Several surviving records in literary sources or inscriptions on marble bases testify the statues of the emperor set around the vast empire, many of them were erected in Constantinople. They specify the material: aside the usual marble or bronze figures there were few silver plated and silver: a silver statue on column was placed in Augusteion in Constantinople in 390; type: standing, seated or equestrian figure; special arrangement: there was a spiral



column crowned by colossal statue on the Forum of Theodosius in Constantinople, 386-394; composition: single figure or a group of the emperor and his family.

Porphyry, a beautiful and noble stone, was always highly regarded for its purple color. All the porphyry known comes from a single quarry in Egypt's eastern desert, the *Mons Porphyrites*, or Porphyry Mountain, which was worked intermittently from the 1st to the 4th century A.D. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, 36.57) testifies that the first statues made of porphyry were brought to Rome at the time of Claudius. In the Roman period, owing to its rarity, porphyry was reserved as a stone used exclusively for imperial subjects, thus giving rise to the expression "assuming the purple," or ascending to the throne. The purple color of porphyry was significant, since we know the imperial toga was dyed purple. As C. C. Vermeule correctly observed: "Colored marbles were used in Roman portraiture not to suggest skin color, but to convey an imperial, dynastic, and political message".¹

CONDITION

Despite few broken off and missing parts (tip of the nose; hair above the right side of the forehead with part of the diadem; some glass inlays) the head is in excellent state of conservation preserving the original polishing of the stone.

PROVENANCE

Ex- German private collection, Munich, acquired in the 1980s.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2

¹ VERMEULE C. C., *Roman Portraits in Egyptian Colored Stones*, in *Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 2, 1990, p. 41.











PHOENIX
ANCIENT ART





11
FRONT OF THE ARES
ROMAN STATUE
Marble, 1st century AD
100.0 x 100.0 x 100.0 cm
For the Museum of Art and Archaeology, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA
Acquired by the Met in 1909
Metropolitan Museum of Art
www.metmuseum.org



24
LUXURIOUS VASE
Ceramic, 1st century AD
10.0 x 10.0 x 10.0 cm
For the Museum of Art and Archaeology, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA
Acquired by the Met in 1909
Metropolitan Museum of Art
www.metmuseum.org



17
FRAGMENT OF A PAPYRUS BUNDLE
Late Period, 26th-30th centuries B.C.
Fragmentary, 14.5 x 11.5 x 1.5 cm
From the collection of the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
1972

21
A. M. J. BOUTIN
Late Period, 26th-30th centuries B.C.
Fragmentary, 14.5 x 11.5 x 1.5 cm
From the collection of the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
1972

5
FIGURE OF A MAN
Egyptian Late Period, ca. 26th-30th centuries B.C.
Statue, 14.5 x 11.5 x 1.5 cm
Formerly private collection, England;
acquired circa 1914; gift of the
British Museum, London, 1914.
Provenance Requested
info@americanantiquities.com
AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES

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